

PM's Assurance to Bishops of Christian Community

4292. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had recently assured the Bishops of the Christian Community that Government would ensure that attacks on the Christian Community do not recur;

(b) whether the Prime Minister is reported to have said that the attacks were not planned but isolated incidents, which sprouted out of factional quarrels; and

(c) if so, what action Government are taking to ensure that such attacks do not recur?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) The Prime Minister had met a delegation of the Christian community on 31st December, 2000 at Kumarakom, Kerala. During this meeting, the Prime Minister noted that the attacks on some Christians/Christian institutions were in the nature of isolated incidents and expressed the hope that such incidents would not recur. In a separate statement made on 24.12.2000, the Prime Minister called upon all the State Governments to apply the law of the land fairly, firmly and impartially, investigate every incident thoroughly and bring the culprits to book speedily.

(c) In the year 2000, there were 216 incidents of violence involving persons/institutions of the Christian community of which only 114 incidents resulted directly or indirectly from tension between Hindus/Tribals and Christians and were minor in nature. 93 incidents pertained to crime/law and order without having any communal angle. Remaining 9 cases pertain to attacks on some Christian institutions in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Goa by an organization known as 'Deendar Anjuman'. It has emerged from the investigation that the activists of the Deendar Anjuman had links in Pakistan.

It will be seen from the above that a large number of cases pertained to law and order and crime and do not fall under the category of communal incidents.

Government is committed to upholding the secular principles enshrined in the Constitution of India, safeguarding the interests of minorities and dealing firmly with the perpetrators of communal violence. The activities of all such organizations having a bearing on maintenance of communal harmony in the country are under constant watch of law enforcement agencies and requisite legal action is taken, where necessary.

'Public Order*' and 'Police' appear at Entry No. 1 and 2 of List-II-State List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Hence, it is the primary responsibility of the State Governments to maintain public order and peace, including registration, investigation of crime and compiling of data relating to communal incidents.

The Government of India shares intelligence and sends advisories/alert message to the States/UTs from time to time and Central Para-military Forces are made available to them on specific request. A special force called the Rapid Action Force is deployed to deal exclusively with the communal tensions. Assistance is also being provided to State Governments for modernization of their policing infrastructure. In addition, detailed guidelines have been issued in October, 1997 for the promotion of communal harmony.

Talks with militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir

4293. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to initiate a dialogue with militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

(b) if so, the broad framework of the dialogue;

(c) whether All Party Hurriyat Conference has responded to this offer in a positive way without insisting on Pakistan's participation; and

(d) if not, the response of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO):

(a) and (b) Shri K.C. Pant, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission